

The plan the President has put forth would close the gates of college campuses to many students. In a global economy, and increasingly tied to information technology, we will depend more and more on workers with advanced training and skills.

This is more than a student going to college to become a teacher or a doctor or a lawyer or an engineer; it is young men and women getting out of high school and becoming automobile mechanics or working in the health care profession.

When I graduated from high school, if you wanted to be an automobile mechanic, you went to work at the corner service station and became a mechanic. It is not that way anymore. To be hired to be an automobile mechanic at a car dealership, you have to have a certificate indicating you have been properly trained. That is what will happen at our local community colleges. That is something of which we have to be aware, that young men and women who want to do this need to be able to borrow money to get an education.

A college degree, long seen as a ticket to financial success, is becoming a prerequisite for achieving the American dream. At the same time, students face even higher tuition costs. Attending a 4-year private university can cost up to \$40,000 a year. And even public universities are becoming too expensive for many students. Some students face double-digit percentage increases for tuition at State schools next year.

So we cannot allow this administration's plan to proceed as it deals with college loans because it would prevent many capable students from attending college. The administration's plan would also have a negative impact on those who have already attended college.

This month, millions of students will graduate from our Nation's colleges and universities. They and their families will be rightfully proud that they have earned a diploma. Yet they do not know what the true cost of their education will be, which they have largely financed with student loans. The President's plan will cost them thousands of dollars in additional interest payments.

Already, graduates are heavily burdened with student loan debt. As a consequence, they are often unable to pursue a job in the field of their choice and, instead, are forced to work in a higher paying job but a less personally fulfilling job, if they can find it.

There are wonderful young men and women who work in the Senate offices. They each work for one of us because they want to contribute to what they believe is a better society. They could go other places to work. I could pick lots of people from my office and use them as examples.

I have two people with Ph.Ds who work for me: One has a doctoral degree in physics and the other has a doctorate in geology from fine universities around America. They could work

other places and make more money, but they love what they are doing here. I am so happy they work for me. They owe money on student loans. So we have to make sure the plan suggested by this administration will not go forward.

I could pick as examples lots of university graduates who have worked for me. I could pick, as I mentioned, Dr. Greg Jaczko. I could pick Dr. Kai Anderson. But as an example here today, I am going to pick Shannon Eagan.

Shannon is from Las Vegas. She works on my staff, and she is really good. She does legislative correspondence. She also does legislative assistance work. She is intelligent, talented, ambitious, and interested in a career in public service. But she has to repay tens of thousands of dollars in student loans because her parents are not wealthy.

The President's plan would require her to pay thousands and thousands of dollars in addition to what she already owes. Of course, she fears that a relatively low-paying Government job such as she has will not enable her to meet these needs. She is considering, sadly, seeking a higher paying, private sector job, even though she likes what she is doing in her job.

If she leaves my staff, I will lose a valuable employee, the State of Nevada will not be helped as much as it could be, and the Senate will lose a valuable employee. I think it will have a detrimental effect on our country, a very small, but significant detrimental effect.

So we have to watch this very closely. There are hundreds of thousands of young Americans who face the same dilemma as Shannon. They want to dedicate themselves to serving our country as teachers or social workers or working in the Congress of the United States. But when they do the math—calculating their salary and their expenses, including their student loan payments—they discover it simply is not possible.

Since we need more bright, motivated people to work in these occupations, including being a teacher, this is really a double whammy on us. If education is truly a priority for this administration, they will drop this plan to raise the cost of student loans. We all must be aware of this. It affects millions of people, and we should do everything we can so the students get the benefit, not the banks.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess until 3:45 today and that the time be equally divided from that time until the vote at 6.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 1:58 p.m., recessed until 3:45 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. NELSON of Nebraska).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from Nebraska, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I wish to address my fellow Senators as in morning business for about 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MENTAL HEALTH PARITY MOVEMENT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today to express my appreciation to President Bush for his commitment to bringing insurance parity to people with mental illness.

As a long time supporter of mental health parity legislation in the Senate, I found his statement today in New Mexico to be a breath of fresh air in a debate that has languished for too long here in Washington.

I will always believe that when it comes to health insurance coverage, mental illness should be treated like any physical ailment. Unfortunately, those suffering from mental health disorders have for years suffered undue discrimination at the hands of insurers who force them to pay higher costs than patients suffering from physical ailments.

I believe there simply is no scientific, clinical, fiscal or ethical reason for this discrimination.

I applaud President Bush for his commitment to ending it and leveling the health care playing field to require equal access to psychiatric treatment and care.

As President Bush pointed out today in New Mexico, people suffering from severe and persistent mental problems don't suffer alone. Their illness affects their families and loved ones, and even our country.

It is incredibly painful to watch someone you love struggle with an illness that affects their mind, their feelings and their relationships with others, and that difficulty is only exacerbated when care and treatment options are denied or placed out of reach due to high costs.

Remarkable treatments exist, yet many people—too many people in my